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DISSOLUTION,

RELATING TO THE

— OF —

Final Restoration of the Jews

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A
DISSERTATION
ON THE
PROPHECIES

RELATING TO THE
Final Restoration of the Jews.

THE LION HATH ROARED, WHO WILL NOT FEAR?
THE LORD GOD HATH SPOKEN, WHO CAN BUT PROPHECY?
Amos iii, 8.

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P R E F A C E.

AMONG the few, whose attention the following Treatise may attract, there may be some whom it will be proper to apprise, that on the subject of it three different opinions have been entertained; one of which is, That the predictions promising a final restoration to the people of Israel, are to be interpreted in a spiritual sense, and expected to be fulfilled only in an heavenly country: Another, That they are to be received indeed literally, yet cannot be accomplished on the present earth, but will be so on a new one, which shall furnish an ample theatre for the promised scene of happiness: The third is, that which takes for its ground the plain declarations of Scripture, and is now to be submitted to the Reader's judgement. It was necessary, in treating of this, to notice the principal arguments urged in support of the other hypotheses; these, I hope, I have stated fairly, as well as answered satisfactorily. The great source of the controversies on this point has been the doctrine of the Millennium, entirely separate however,

ever, from the difficulties attendant on this, the question of fact may be considered; for though neither the system of the antient, nor that of the modern Millenaries be well founded, still the antient people of the Lord may be gathered together, and see a long age of prosperity under the protection of God and His Christ: And there is the same reason for now calling on men to attend to the predictions which contain assurances of this, as has been assigned for the delivery of those promises of future salvation, made by the prophets to their country when in a state of adversity and suffering. To preserve the afflicted Israelites from despondency, in the midst of rebukes for their disobedience, and menaces of punishment, the future mercies of God were revealed, and the hopes of the remnant who had not forfeited their inheritance kept alive by declarations, that the promise once given should never fail; to confirm the wavering, encourage the fearful, rouse the unthinking, and strike awe into the scoffer, and the faithless, it is now requisite to demonstrate, that the promises which have not yet been fulfilled, have still not failed, since the time at first
marked

marked for their accomplishment is not yet arrived, though the things preparatory to it have hitherto been regularly coming to pass, and nothing has yet happened to render the event either impossible, or even less probable; while the triumph which the unbelievers might gain from supposed failures, is destroyed by its being proved, that those whose interpretations have been false, have been deceived through their own ignorance or hastiness only, and that that portion of their hopes which was justly grounded on the promises, is not lost, but only deferred. The Jews might expect, that whenever the Messiah should appear, the kingdom should be restored unto Israel, and all the promised glories of his reign be displayed; but the prophets had declared, that He must appear first in humility, and through sufferings make His way to glory. In thinking that their Master would immediately manifest His power unto the world, by freeing their nation from subjection, the apostles were mistaken; nevertheless, their expectation of the kingdom's being given unto Him were just, though it was not for them to know the times or the seasons which the

Father

Father hath put into His own power. The whole controversy between the believer and the infidel may be fairly rested on one point, and that too a point which, if a love of truth be not wanting, may be very soon determined; Our Lord, the prophets, and the apostles have assumed to themselves the power of prophecy, as a certain proof of their Divine Mission, and have left us many predictions in consequence thereof; "Hath
 " time then shewn the justice of this their
 " claim, or not?" A fairer issue cannot be proposed; let every man therefore, with a degree of seriousness proportioned to the opinion he entertains of the importance of the sanctions of religion, consider the scriptural predictions, and compare the accounts therein given of the fate of the Jewish nation, of the treatment and fortunes of the Christian church, and of the state of that part of the earth which hath hitherto been the scene of those fortunes, with what has come to pass; and when he has discovered, how accurately the events have thus far corresponded with the words of the preachers, let him deny, if he can, that the spirit of prophecy dwelt in them.

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DISSERTATION, &c.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

WHETHER the fortunes of the posterity of Israel have hitherto been, and will in future prove consistent with the predictions of the Holy Scriptures concerning them, is a question, in which the Infidel, the Jew, and the Christian are equally interested, since on the determination of it depend the safety of the one, and the deliverance, and hopes of the others: If then to an enquiry closely connected with a point of importance so general, I venture to claim the attention of all, arrogance or presumption will not, I trust, be laid to my charge; neither shall I be accused, of calling those who may peruse the present Tract, from the consideration of subjects of more consequence, to that of trifles. The Prophets of the Lord have addressed themselves unto all lands, and

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they frequently call on the men of every nation, to attend to their declarations, as containing matter of universal concern: Terrible are the judgements, which they denounce against those who shall refuse to listen unto them: Fearful is the vengeance, with which they threaten the careless sinner, and the obstinate unbeliever: the name in which they speak, fully entitling their words to attention, and the manifest truth of those which have already had their completion, forming a just claim to credit for the rest: While they hold up the mercy of God as being ever prepared to receive the penitent, and as ready to give unto the seed of Abraham, if they will turn unto him, the blessings promised to their forefathers; and afford unto the sincere Christian, by the accuracy with which they have foretold the fortunes of the Church, a light which may guide him through the gloom raised by superstition; and constantly manifest unto him the path of truth, though all around him be enveloped in the thick darkness of infidelity. For however low the cause of true religion may at present appear, however active and inveterate its enemies may be, however cold and indolent many who would be thought its friends, the faithful servant of Christ need not be disheartened, since such a state of things was foretold by the Apostles of his Lord*; and even the Lord his

* 2 Tim. iii, 1. 2 Pet. iii, 3. Jude, verse 18.

self† hath warned him to expect it. While his recollecting that the various unfavourable circumstances which have in time past intervened between the delivery of predictions that have been already fulfilled and the accomplishment of them, have in the event afforded no impediment to their completion, but that the God of Israel hath diffused by the ministry of that people, (however unlikely, from the detestation and contempt in which they were generally holden, to be the givers of a religion unto the nations) the knowledge of himself through the greatest part of the civilized world, and overthrown, as he declared he would, the empire of the idols; the Christian's recollection, I say, of these grand and general events which have come to pass according to the words of the prophets, will raise in him full assurance, that their declarations will continue to prove true, and teach him to wait their season, unmoved by all the invidious suggestions of his adversary the infidel; who employed in groveling about particulars, some of which are so difficult to be decided on at all, that they can yield moral evidence to very few, and others such, that even if they were determined, no material arguments could be drawn from them, gains at best a fancied security, that can tend but to render the destruction to which it leads, more miserable. Thus the industrious

† Matt. xxiv, 12. Luke xviii, 8.

compiler and ingenious editor* of the several cavils and various objections raised against the gospel by its different enemies of all ages, religions and countries, antient and modern, Jew and Greek, French and English, after all the pains he hath taken in setting their arguments in the most favourable light, and endeavouring to find a vulnerable part, where these combined forces might make some impresson, hath never ventured to controvert the great and leading facts, or to deny that the worship of the God

* Should it be thought that I am not warranted to rank the writer here alluded to, among the supporters of infidelity, because he has disclaimed all intention to insinuate any thing against the truth of Christianity, being merely constrained by the calls of duty to state the arguments he has copied; I have to answer, *quid dista, &c.* Since it is not very credible that a sincere believer would have sent abroad into the world a collection so calculated to mislead the ignorant and deceive the unwary, as that contained in the two celebrated chapters, and the notes thereon: Still, if it can tend at all to exculpate this author, I readily acknowledge that the demonstration of the existence of these secondary causes cannot by any mean prove that of the Primary One (divine interposition) unnecessary; for beside the argument arising from such different causes having all conspired to one purpose, any man who will attentively consider them, will perceive, that had the claim which the first preachers of the gospel so openly made to supernatural gifts, been ill founded, these several causes, in lieu of forwarding the imposture, would naturally have led to a detection, and have tended not only to impede, but to put an entire stop to the progress of their doctrine.

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of Israel is established, and He acknowledged by many nations heretofore sunk in the grossest idolatry, to be the only true God, or that the people, to whom He had at first particularly revealed himself, are now dispersed over the world, as monuments of his justice in punishing the disobedient and perverse.

Now as the review of those prophecies, which have already had their accomplishment, thus tends to uphold the patient confidence of the Christian, and to form a bulwark against the attacks of the unbeliever, so, I should conceive, the contemplation of the importance of the declarations relating to events yet future, delivered by the same persons, of the truth of whose words the past hath yielded so powerful conviction, would at least have some further effect in confirming the hope, and strengthening the resolution of the former, and in awakening the latter to a reconsideration of those reasonings, a deception in which must involve him in calamities the most deplorable: But if I may not hope, that any good will be wrought on the last by this mean, or even reasonably expect the honour of the least attention from such, I shall yet deem the trouble I have taken in my researches after the matter contained in this treatise amply repaid, if it excites any of the first description to enter on speculations, which cannot but afford the most rational entertainment, as well as cer-

tain improvement to every mind not enthusiastically or superstitiously employed thereon.

It is true, much abler pens have laboured on the general subject on which I write; but some particulars though of moment, have hitherto been left unnoticed, and in others, I shall prove, material errors have been committed; and since I purpose to be guided by nothing but the express declarations of *Holy Scripture*, and the fairest reasoning most clearly arising therefrom; I trust my calling in question the hypothesis of any former writer, of however great name, will not prevent what I have to offer in justification of my so doing, being candidly read throughout. The ideas I entertain were first suggested by the study of the Sacred Writings, the further that study was pursued, the more those ideas were confirmed; and after repeated examinations I see, or at least I think that I see, the truth of them still more clearly.

THE Prophecies now to be considered naturally fall into three divisions: The first containing those which relate simply to the event itself, the final restoration of the Israelitish People to their antient country; noticing neither any preceding, concomitant, or subsequent circumstances: The second, those which mark the circumstances attendant on this great event: And the last, such as describe the happy and glorious state

state of this restored race.—And the second of these divisions especially, will necessarily comprize much connected matter, worthy of our most earnest meditation.

CHAPTER II.

Review of predictions which relate simply to the final restoration of the Israelites.

THE reader may perhaps think, that it will be time enough to express my astonishment at there being any, who, having read the Holy Scriptures, can yet entertain a doubt of its being therein foretold, that the posterity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob shall finally be reinstated in the possession of that very country, which was promised by God to their forefathers, and their seed for ever, when I have laid before him the prophecies establishing this point; but I declare it now, that I may thereby call his attention more particularly to the words and several circumstances of the promise itself, and of the predictions given in confirmation of it. In the 13th chapter of the book of Genesis, ver. 14, we read thus, “ And the Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, “ lift up now thine eyes and look from “ the place where thou art, northward, and “ southward, and eastward, and westward. For

“ all the land which thou seeſt, to thee will I
 “ give it, and to thy ſeed for ever.” And in
 the 17th chapter, in which the covenant made
 with Abraham is recorded, we are informed
 that God ſaid unto him—“ And I will eſtabliſh
 “ my covenant between me and thee, and thy
 “ ſeed after thee, in their generations, for an
 “ everlaſting covenant; to be a God unto thee,
 “ and to thy ſeed after thee. And I will give
 “ unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee, the
 “ land wherein thou art a ſtranger, all the land
 “ of Canaan for an everlaſting poſſeſſion.” Now
 figurative interpretation apart, and the words
 of them being taken in their general accepta-
 tion, what would a plain man conclude from
 theſe and ſimilar paſſages, containing repetitions
 of the ſame promiſe to Iſaac and Jacob, (that
 of the 28th of Gen. ver. 13, 14, 15, in which
 the promiſed land, is ſpecified to be that on
 which Jacob then lay, and an aſſurance is given,
 that God will not leave him till he hath done
 that which he hath ſpoken unto him, being
 eſpecially conſidered,) but that however the
 poſterity of theſe patriarchs may for their ſins
 have been driven at different ſeaſons into tem-
 porary exile, yet, as the promiſes of God are
 without repentance, they will finally be reſtored
 to this country, and enjoy it, as long as the
 earth itſelf ſhall endure? Would not ſuch a
 man be inclined to think, that if they were ut-
 terly

terly destroyed from off it, never to return, the promise would thereby fail, and were we to attempt to convince him of the contrary, by telling him, that it would be fulfilled on a new earth; would he not reply, that no land on that could be the land which Abraham saw, or on which Jacob slept?

THERE are who will answer to this, “ If some
 “ parts of the promise will bear only a spiritual
 “ interpretation, why not put such a construc-
 “ tion on them all? But if the earth which now
 “ is, be reserved unto fire, as St. Peter declares,
 “ it is clear, that the words expressive of the
 “ duration of the possession must be spiritually
 “ interpreted, not to mention that neither of
 “ the patriarchs ever literally received the
 “ country thus assured unto them; why then
 “ take the rest in this acceptation, if you can-
 “ not these parts of the promise?” The ground
 on which I contend for so doing is this:—All
 but mystic Divines will, I believe, allow, that
 passages which will without absurdity bear a
 literal sense, should be taken in such; and this
 by no mean precludes those that will not from
 being received in another: If there have been
 then any blessings promised to Abraham and his
 seed, whether natural or by faith, which they
 cannot obtain in this life, let such be expected
 in the heavenly Canaan: But if there be many
 that can be enjoyed here, why spiritualize all
 predictions

predictions which yield hope of such? May not the arrival of these be preparatory to the manifestation of those, and the righteous gradually ascend, through the receipt of the promise of this life, to that of the life which is to come?

BUT the negative argument, arising from the want of necessity of any other interpretation, is far from being the only one that can be produced for here receiving the literal—Since though the fathers might for themselves expect only celestial blessings, and an heavenly city, yet they might hope that their posterity would be blessed on the earth, and that as the Lord had promised (Gen. xv, 13—16) to bring them back from the strange land in which they were first to sojourn, so likewise should they afterward be given into bondage, He would not fail to repeat the mercy, or continue to be a God unto them, and their seed after them. At least, whatever were the expectations entertained on this head before the age of Moses, after that no doubt could remain; since by him it was expressly declared, that if when they should experience the curses with which God threatened them, if they forsook his law, they “became humbled, “and accepted the punishment of their iniquity, “then would He remember his covenant with “Jacob, and also his covenant with Isaac, and “also his covenant with Abraham, and He would “remember the land.” Lev. xxvi, 41, 42.—

And

And further, in ver. 44, "Yet for all that when
 " they be in the land of their enemies, I will
 " not cast them away, neither will I abhor them,
 " to destroy them, and to break my covenant
 " with them; for I am the Lord *their* God."

From the several passages already quoted, two things, I conceive, must be, if we reason fairly, concluded, first, That the land promised unto Abraham is assured unto the seed of Israel, as long as any of that seed shall survive*. Secondly, That that seed shall never be utterly destroyed †. But to these inferences stands opposed an hypothesis founded on St. Paul's declaration, that
 " they are not all Israel, which are of Israel,
 " neither because they are the seed of Abraham
 " are they all children, but the children of the
 " promise are accounted for the seed." On which it is maintained, "that the Jews, by their
 " impious rejection of the Messiah, universally
 " forfeited their national title to the temporal
 " blessing of the covenant; and that the spiri-
 " tual blessings being still obtainable by every
 " Jew who will obey the divine call, and lay
 " claim to it by his conversion to the faith of
 " the gospel, we are to look for no other return
 " from their present dispersion, no other com-
 " ing in of their fulness, than that which will
 " be brought about by the gradual transplanting

* See quotation, p. 8.

† See the last quotation.

" from

“ from earth to heaven of the several converted
 “ Jews, till that number be completed, which
 “ God in process of time shall have called out
 “ of his once peculiar people *.”

It is with singular reluctance I call in question the arguments of a writer, for whom I justly retain so high an estimation as I do for him whose sentiments I have now repeated †; but to me he appears not to have sufficiently considered the extent of the covenant made with the fathers, nor to have accurately examined the promises since given, neither to have reviewed with the necessary care the whole of the apostle's reasoning thereon.

ONE branch of the original covenant was, that the Lord would be “ a God unto Abraham “ and his seed after him.” Words, I apprehend of great and peculiar import, and the interpretation of which is to be found only in those promises afterwards given by the prophets, in which God assures his people, that he will work on them that truly divine work of cleansing them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against him; which indeed is in the

* See Tottie's Sermons, serm. xv.

† It is but a just tribute to the memory of one, whom all that knew, revered and loved, to say further, that I examine in particular the arguments of the abovementioned writer, as being the best summary lately made of what can be said on that side, and produced by a man whose character gave additional weight to all he uttered.

prophecy of Jeremiah (chap. xxxi, 31) called a new covenant; but then it is plain from the context, that it is there so named in opposition only to that made on mount Sinai, since the very words of the former one with Abraham are retained; for thus runs the passage, "Behold
 " the daies come, saith the Lord, that I will
 " make a new covenant with the house of Israel,
 " and with the house of Judah: not according
 " to the covenant that I made with their fathers
 " in the day I took them by the hand, to bring
 " them out of the land of Egypt, (which cove-
 " nant they brake, although I was an husband
 " unto them, saith the Lord) but this shall be
 " the covenant that I will make with the house
 " of Israel, After those daies, saith the Lord,
 " I will put my law in their inward parts, and
 " write it in their hearts, and will be their God,
 " and they shall be my people."—Such a cove-
 nant the intervening transgressions of the peo-
 ple will be so far from rendering void, that
 without them it would have been needless*;
 while the words of the ratification may further
 assure us, that it never can be rendered null;
 for "thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can
 " be measured, and the foundations of the earth
 " searched out beneath, I will also cast off

* That the sins of the people would not prevent the gracious purposes of God, or the full completion of this promise, St. Paul himself strongly argues, Rom. chap. iii, ver. 3—and 11, 29—31.

" all

“ all the seed of Israel, for all that they have
 “ done, saith the Lord †.” If it be replied,
 that still all these promises may be applied to
 the repentance and salvation which a chosen
 remnant have obtained through the gospel, with-
 out supposing the bulk of the nation concerned
 in them: I must answer, first, that it is expressly
 declared (a point that will be proved at large
 hereafter,) that the restoration shall be national;
 and St. Paul his self confirms it, (Rom. xi) for
 though he speaks of a remnant, which had at
 that time obtained the election, he is far from
 saying that the rest are so blinded as never to
 return to the truth; nay, he clearly places this
 remnant in opposition to the great body of the
 nation, who should hereafter be sanctified by it,
 and putting the question of these last, “ Have
 “ they stumbled that they should fall?” an-
 swers it in the negative, declaring, that “ If the
 “ first fruits (those who then received the gospel,
 “ called by the apostle, the election of grace)
 “ be holy, the lump, (plainly the bulk of the
 “ nation, as opposed to that election) must be
 “ so too*,” and if the root, so must the branches,

† See further on this head, Jer. xxxiii, 7, 8; Ezek. xi,
 19, 20, and xxxvi, 26, 27; Micah vii, 18, 19, 20, but
 particularly this last verse, in which we are referred to the
 covenant with the fathers of old, as containing the promise
 of such mercy: no slight corroboration of the above con-
 struction of the words of that covenant!

* The case to which the apostle refers, as affording an
 instance

and that though "some of the branches were
 " broken off by unbelief, yet God is able to
 " graft them in;" concluding with informing
 those to whom he writes, that this "partial
 " blindness is happened unto Israel until the
 " fulness of the Gentiles come in, and so (by
 " this blindness being only temporary) all Israel
 " shall at last be saved†."

AND secondly, the existence of this very remnant does of itself preserve the national title to whatever temporal blessings were promised to the seed of Abraham, since the ill conduct of one part, though that be even much the larger,

instance similar to that of his own day, confirms the above reasoning, since although at the time Elias made the complaint, there were but 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal, the whole assembly of the people afterwards returned to their senses, and acknowledging their error exclaimed, "The Lord, he is God, The Lord, he is God!"

† If we conceive that the fulness of the Jews shall be gathered in the way supposed by this author, and mentioned in p. 313 of his sermons, we may well ask, What advantage then hath the Jew? Are not all men saved in this method? Yet the promises of God to that nation, whom for their father's sake He hath chosen to be the peculiar instruments of his providence, seem to portend especial blessings unto them, besides that of having the oracles of God committed to them—And moreover, the term *all*, here used by the apostle, cannot surely mean only a remnant, which is but a part of the whole; it must in common sense stand for both the remnant before spoken of, and the body of the nation opposed unto it.

cannot

cannot defeat that claim which the good behaviour of the other keeps alive*.

BUT to return from the consideration of this hypothesis; Moses assured the people of Israel, that if during their dispersions they would repent, and return unto the Lord, he would bring them back to the land "which their forefathers possessed;" words which can be applied but to that country on this globe, that was formerly inhabited by the Jewish nation—Here he assures them, that "the Lord will circumcise their hearts, and the hearts of their seed to love the Lord their God, with all their hearts, and with all their souls, that they might live both in the practice of righteousness, and in the enjoyment of every external good which the Lord will give unto them." Deut. xxx, 1—10†. And such a return Isaiah has most expressly foretold, in a passage that begins thus, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand a second time to recover the remnant of this people from Assyria, &c."‡—For the prophecy is by its own terms limited to a recovery yet future, since

* "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect." Rom. iii, 3.

† See also Deut. iv, 30—where the time of such repentance, and consequent restoration, is placed in the latter daies.

‡ Isa. xi, 11.

it is said that it shall come to pass in the daies of the Messiah, and be also the second recover of the remnant of his people from Assyria, and the other countries in which they should be dispersed; whereas there has yet been but one such recovery, and that prior to the daies of the Messiah.—Indeed any one, who will attentively peruse the words of this prophet, from the 49th chapter to the end of his book, will see sufficient reason to believe, that the temporal deliverance of the Israelities forms a part of the great redemption promised them, and that the manifestation of their eternal inheritance on a new earth, will be preceded by an happy restoration to their original one on this. But, Can this world (it is here asked) ever become the residence of happiness? Can we expect to see those images of peace, Abundance and Felicity, which the prophets have drawn, realized Here? Or, Is it to be thought, that that degree of righteousness, of which they speak, can ever prevail among a race so degenerate? To this I reply, as before to a similar question; If the prophets have predicted things, which it is clearly impossible should be brought to pass on this earth, we may fairly conclude, that in such passages heavenly blessings are shadowed out; but still, (as the improvement of the earthly is by no mean incompatible with the subsequent manifestation of the heavenly state,) let it be considered,



sidered, how few are the natural evils of life, when compared with those produced by human conduct: It is neither by the sterility of the earth, or the inclemency of the seasons, that so large a portion of a mankind are subjected to penury and distress, but by their own vices, or the unequal distribution of property; take away the devastation which luxury causes, the ravages which ambition makes, and the injuries occasioned by avarice; let the rich be generous, the poor industrious, and all follow the dictates of reason, and the laws of temperance; let the precepts of the gospel meet with a ready obedience, let truth be followed, justice be cultivated, and benevolence be exercised, and the degree of happiness thence diffused over the world would not come so short of the prophetic picture as may at first be imagined: It is among a people thus delivered from the dominion of vice, and living under the Almighty's immediate protection, that the *enchanted scene* is placed, and surely, no man will dispute His power either to give the blessings, or to find objects fit to receive them.

BUT the New Testament (it is further urged) speaks a different language, "It is the repeated doctrine of Christ and his apostles, that the present world was never designed to be the mansion of righteousness and happiness."

* See this objection fully stated, and the various particulars it includes drawn out, and strongly put, in the Sermon already quoted.

It

It is true, that our Lord called on men to take up their cross, and follow Him, that His apostles warned their converts to look for their reward from heaven, and that their sincere followers have hitherto experienced much vexation and hard usage in the world—But do these things prove that true religion, accompanied with great blessings, shall never flourish on the earth? It was not the business of the first preachers of the gospel to hold forth, as an encouragement to those whom they exhorted to embrace Christianity, a state of happiness, which was not to be established on earth, till long after the period of their stay on it; nor to set before them blessings, which they were never to taste: They therefore called their attention only to that felicity of which all the righteous should, after the general resurrection, partake: However soon persecution might put an end to their lives, however long it might be before the visible establishment of the kingdom of God, this was a reward which no one, who sincerely obeyed the gospel, could fail to obtain: On recommending the pursuit of this then they seem wholly intent, and that final restoration, and those earthly glories which God had promised to his peculiar people, are only incidentally mentioned by any of the apostles, except Him, who was particularly favoured with prophetic revelation; though his testimony indeed is, as will hereafter be shewn,

sufficiently express to establish of itself the point
 in controversy: At present some more predic-
 tions of the Old Testament demand our con-
 sideration; it being declared in them, that al-
 though the families of Judah and Israel be for
 their iniquities scattered among the heathen, at
 the end they shall be gathered, and brought to
 the land of their forefathers, and by their gain-
 ing a fixed establishment therein, the promise
 made unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shall be
 performed, " For the children of Israel (saith
 " the prophet Hosea) shall abide many daies
 " without a king, and without a prince, and
 " without a sacrifice, and without an image,
 " and without an ephod, and without teraphim.
 " Afterward shall the children of Israel return,
 " and seek the Lord their God, and David their
 " king, and shall fear the Lord, and his good-
 " ness in the latter daies." Chap. iii, 45—in
 which text these phrases, " the latter daies,"
 and " shall seek David their king," limit the
 concluding event foretold to the times of the
 Messiah, and of their acknowledging Him,
 whom they had before denied. The words
 of Jeremiah too are express on the same point;
 " Behold the daies come, saith the Lord,
 " that I will raise unto David a righteous
 " branch, and a king shall reign and prosper,
 " and shall execute judgment and justice in the
 " earth: In his daies Judah shall be saved, and
 " Israel

" Israel shall dwell safely; and This is His
 " name whereby He shall be called, The Lord
 " our Righteousness: Therefore behold the daies
 " come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more
 " say, The Lord liveth which brought up the
 " children of Israel out of the land of Egypt:
 " but, The Lord liveth, which brought up, and
 " which led the seed of the house of Israel out
 " of the north-country, and from all the coun-
 " tries whither I had driven them, and they
 " shall dwell in their own land †." Now after
 repeating this passage, may we not fairly ask,
 If the reduction of the children of Israel first
 mentioned in it, was literally a reduction from
 the land of Egypt, to the country given unto
 Abraham, by what rule of construction can the
 reduction last mentioned be interpreted either
 figuratively, or as intended to a country not yet
 existing?—Further, As the ten tribes which
 formed the kingdom of Israel have not yet been
 brought back, no predictions expressly mention-
 ing the return of both Judah and Israel, can
 justly be applied to the deliverance from the
 Babylonish captivity; the following texts there-
 fore, in which a return is promised, after much
 suffering, must relate to one that is yet future—
 " Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, say-
 " ing, Write all the words that I have spoken
 " to thee in a book. For lo, the daies come,

† Jer. xxiii, 5, 6, 7, 8.

"saith the Lord, that I will bring again the
 "captivity of my people Israel and Judah,
 "saith the Lord, and I will cause them to re-
 "turn to the land that I gave to their fathers,
 "and they shall possess it. And these are the
 "words that the Lord spake concerning Israel,
 "and concerning Judah. For thus saith the
 "Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling,
 "of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and
 "see, Whether a man doth travail with child?
 "Wherefore do I see every man with his hands
 "on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all
 "faces turned into paleness? Alas, for that day
 "is great, so that none is like it: It is even the
 "time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved
 "out of it. For it shall come to pass in that
 "day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will
 "break his yoke from off thy neck, and will
 "burst thy bonds, and they shall no more serve
 "themselves of him. But they shall serve the
 "Lord their God, and David their king,
 "whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore,
 "Fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith
 "the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel; for
 "lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed
 "from the land of their captivity, and Jacob
 "shall return, and shall be in rest and quiet,
 "and none shall make him afraid. For I am
 "with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee:
 "Though I make a full end of all nations
 "whither

" whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not
 " make a full end of thee." Jer. xxx, 2—11.
 Here I acknowledge, that I much doubt, whe-
 the truth of this prophecy can by any mean be
 maintained by those who contend, that the po-
 sterity of Israel shall never more be gathered as
 a nation; the same I may say too of the promise
 that God would never leave Jacob, till He had
 done that which He had spoken unto him;
 neither can this doubt be unreasonable, since the
 following passage contains a plain acknowledge-
 ment, that without a much happier restoration,
 than has yet been effected, they will not have
 received the good promised unto them.—" And
 " now therefore thus saith the Lord God of
 " Israel concerning this city, whereof ye say,
 " It shall be delivered into the hand of the king
 " of Babylon, by the sword, and by the famine,
 " and by the pestilence: Behold I will gather
 " them out of all countries, whither I have
 " driven them in mine anger, and in my fury,
 " and in great wrath; and I will bring them
 " again into this place, and I will cause them
 " to dwell safely. And they shall be my peo-
 " ple, and I will be their God. And I will give
 " them one heart, and one way, that they may
 " fear me for ever, for the good of them, and
 " of their children after them. And I will make
 " an everlasting covenant with them, that I will
 " not turn away from them, to do them good,
 C 4 " but

“ but I will put my fear in their hearts, that
 “ they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will
 “ rejoice over them to do them good, and I will
 “ plant them in *this land assuredly with my whole*
 “ *heart, and with my whole soul.* For thus saith
 “ the Lord, Like as I have brought all this
 “ great evil upon this people, so will I bring
 “ upon them *all the good that I have promised*
 “ *them.*” Jer. xxxii, 36—42.

In the texts I have thus quoted, the words are strong, the assertions decisive, and the prophecies express; but strong, decisive, and express as these are, the reader will find other passages noted in the margin to be no less so †. While the declarations of the prophet Daniel, that in the days of those kingdoms, into which the last of the four great empires hath been divided, the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom, which shall break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms; and, that the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High §, confirm

† Jer. iii, 18; xvi, 14; xxx, 18—22; xxi, 10—40; xxxii—. Ezek xx, 40; xxxvi, 22, &c. Joel iii—. Obad. xvii, 21, and Zech. throughout.

§ Dan. ii, 44. In the 11th chapter of the Revelations, after the acclamation of the kingdoms of the world (itself a strong expression) are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and the consequent doxology, is declared, ver. 19, that the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the

the expectation of an empire, as literally such as any that has yet appeared, and fix the establishment of it on this very globe, on which the others, mentioned in the same vision, have flourished.—Nevertheless, numerous as these testimonies are, and direct as is the evidence which they form, it has been thought that objections sufficiently valid against them may be drawn from the general doctrines, that the righteous must wait for their recompence until the resurrection of the just; that the wheat and tares must grow together 'till the harvest; and that the righteous and the wicked shall at one and the same time appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, who will then, and not before, separate the sheep from the goats, and establish the kingdom of righteousness in glory for ever: But surely such objections weigh not much; for although the good and pious, who pass through life, wait for their final reward 'till the resurrection of the just, is it incredible, that before that time God should manifest peculiar favour to a portion of such that will be found in the world? Or, Who will say, When the harvest alluded to in our Lord's parable of the wheat and tares is to begin? Or, That the universal dispensation of rewards and punishments being the ark of His testament was seen in it; an emblem which can relate to that people alone, with whom the covenant to which that ark belonged was made.

to be made at the end of the world, precludes a gift of a long age of blessings to that seed, whose are the adoption, the glory, the covenants and the promises? Indeed, the parable of the wheat and tares itself is so worded, that if we compare it with other passages of Holy Writ, it will, I conceive, rather confirm than invalidate that doctrine, which, I think, is contained in the Scriptures—the sacred Writers expressly distinguish between the present and the future age, and of the latter, the Messiah is in *Is. ix, 6*, called the Father.—Now the word (*ἀνθρώπων*), said our Lord, is the field, and at the end of this age (*ἐν τῇ ἐσχατίᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ τούτου*), the Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, &c.—Now where will you place this kingdom, out of which things that offend may be gathered? You will scarcely suppose it to be on the new earth—But if you allow it to be that kingdom, which is mentioned by Daniel, as swallowing up all others, and the foundations of which are already laid here, not only this difficulty vanishes, but there appears the justest harmony between the passages now cited, and what we read in the 14th chapter of the Revelations, ver. 14, 17, where the angels are represented as sent forth to reap the earth, previous to the millenary reign of Christ and His saints. And since the manifesta-

tion

tion of the Messiah's kingdom on earth, in which none but true Israelites, cleansed from all iniquity, can have a part, but where such will enjoy the happiness, and the glory promised to the seed of Abraham, is preparatory to, and also most emblematic of that still more extended state of felicity to be revealed when the New Heavens and the New Earth shall appear, it is no wonder that in many parts of Scripture they are not severally distinguished; but if in others they be most clearly so, it is certainly more reasonable to use the last passages as a clue to the former, than to endeavour to shelter ourselves behind these against the force of those. The texts I am now going to lay before the reader, as containing such a distinction, are by no mean obscure; they deliver their doctrine in a most marked manner, and great as are the names of some who have thought lightly of them, their clearness is, I presume, beyond all reasonable dispute, and their authority, I am sure, is supreme. In the 38th chapter of Ezekiel, after a most express promise, delivered in the preceding chapter, that God will bring back both Judah and the tribes of Israel to that land *in which their fathers have dwelt*, the prophet is directed to address himself unto many distant nations, the chief of which are called Gog and Magog, and part of this address is as follows, ver. 8.—“After many
 “daies thou shalt be visited: In the latter years
 “thou

" thou shalt come into the land that is brought
 " back from the sword, and is gathered out of
 " many people, against the mountains of Israel,
 " which have been always waste: But it is
 " brought forth out of the nations, and they
 " shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt
 " ascend, and come like a storm, thou shalt be
 " like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all
 " thy bands, and many people. Thus saith the
 " Lord God, It shall also come to pass, that at
 " the same time shall things come into thy
 " mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought.
 " And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land
 " of unwalled villages, I will go to them that
 " are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them
 " dwelling without walls, and having neither
 " bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a
 " prey, &c."—Now those who allow a literal
 restoration of Israel, but place the scene of it on
 a new earth, must, by this passage, be driven
 either to give up the last point, or to embrace
 the strange absurdity of supposing an hostile ex-
 pedition in a region in which we are assured,
 there shall be no more death, neither sorrow,
 nor crying, neither shall there be any more
 pain *; for the tribes of Judah and Israel must
 be restored to their land, wherever that land be,
 before they can become in it the object of an
 attack: While those who deny any such resto-
 ration, flatly contradict all that the prophet has

* Rev. xxi, 4.

here

here asserted: At the same time that the imaginations of both run directly contrary to what is delivered by St. John in the Revelations; who having, in language as open as can be used, declared, that Christ shall reign with his saints 1000 years, places this millenary reign, both before the expedition of Gog and Magog, which he also foretells, and before the destruction of Death †; thereby fixing it, by two most positive signs, to this earth: Nay, in the prophecy of Daniel we read, That though before the kingdom was given to one like the Son of Man, the fourth beast was slain, and his body given to the burning flame; yet the other beasts, though deprived of their dominion, had their lives prolonged for a season, and a time ‡, which consists not with a supposition of a period's being at the same time to be put to the earth's duration. But this is not all; the first resurrection, which St. John informs us shall take place previous to the Millennium, tallies, whether it be supposed to be figurative, or real, or partaking of both, with that life from the dead, which St. Paul declares the receiving of the Jews shall be; as well as, certainly in the first sense, with that resurrection which was shown in a vision to Ezekiel, and explained to be emblematical of the restoration of the house of Israel; while the destruction of death (which must be before the

† Rev. xx.

‡ Dan. vii.

appearance of the new earth) is (as has been just observed) placed in the Revelations, after the Millennium, at the same time that it is, by the apostle to the Corinthians, declared, that Death shall be the last enemy which will be destroyed, the victory over whom being thus perfected, Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even The Father; so that the last act of the Messiah's personal reign (if the expression may be used) being the destruction of Death, unless it be acknowledged, that He will reign on this earth, What will become of all the promises to the seed of Israel, of the happiness they shall enjoy in the land in which their forefathers dwelt under the Lord their God, and David their king? Since when Death is destroyed, God will be All in All, and the earth and heaven which now are, being no more found, those words of Him who sitteth upon the throne will be fulfilled, "Behold I make all things new!"

THERE still, however, continues unnoticed, the remainder of an objection, to the other parts of which I have already replied: "The prophecies assert, that the Messiah's dominion shall extend over all nations; and the parables teach, that out of His kingdom shall be rooted every thing which offendeth; How then shall we listen to the above deduction, which introduces the nations from the four quarters of the world, attempting to spoil the
" visible

“ visible feat of his kingdom?” Now could no answer be at present returned to this difficulty, few, I conceive, who have seriously weighed the testimonies already adduced in support of the point, which I have by them endeavoured to establish, will think its solution not being at this day seen into, sufficient to counterbalance them all: Much less will it be deemed so, when it is recollected, that although it be declared, that those nations shall come against the restored people, yet it is said, 1000 years shall first be passed in uninterrupted peace and righteousness, and that the disturbance arising even then, shall be but for a little season, to the damage of the nations themselves only, and be too an event caused by means extraordinary, and which had been long foretold—their mad designs shall be so far from lessening the power of the Messiah, or interrupting his reign, that the end of them will yield a tremendous proof of both, and the kingdom He shall have firmly established, by the gradual and compleat destruction of all his enemies, shall be delivered up entire to The Father, and translated to a new world, which shall remain for ever before Him.

THIS last objection replied to, let us now review the fruit of the enquiry we have thus perused: It appears then†, that the promise made to Abraham is so absolute, that no beha-

† P. 7, 8, and see in further proof of this, Gen. xvii, 1-14.

viour of his posterity can prevent its accomplishment. Individuals may cut themselves off from any share in it, by not acceding to the terms of the original or subsequent covenant; but to him it was given as a reward for the faith he had already shewn, and the power of God is irrevocably engaged to fulfill it †; and part of the subject of this promise was the everlasting

† The notion of the Jews having universally forfeited their national title to the temporal blessings promised, while it is manifestly false, from such universal forfeiture being prevented by there yet remaining, even in the few converts to the gospel, an holy remnant, seems to have arisen partly from divines (as I before noticed) not sufficiently distinguishing between the covenant made with Abraham, and that made with the congregation of Israel on mount Sinai; the first of which contains an absolute assurance of everlasting possession, and a grant, never to be defeated, of the promised land to Abraham and his seed; but in the last, which is subordinate to the other, it is covenanted, that their possession of the land, to which they were going, should be uninterrupted, *if they kept the law*; otherwise they should be driven from it, but to return whenever they should repent: The conditions of this covenant have hitherto been accurately observed; Will not then those of the other? Will God keep his covenant of severity and not that of mercy? By a future repentance of Israel, the preservation of both may be rendered compatible; at such a final repentance Moses has hinted; to work such in the hearts of His people, God hath by his prophets promised, and declared, that the stock of Israel shall in the end prove as a teil-tree and as an oak, whose substance is in them even when they have cast their leaves, the holy seed being the substance thereof.

possession

possession of that very country, in which the patriarchs themselves sojourned in the daies of their mortality, the land of Canaan §: It is further manifest that the Lord hath declared, That though He make a full end of all other nations, He will not make a full end of that of Israel *; but however He may have driven them from their country, in consequence of their disobedience to the laws He gave them on mount Sinai, He will never utterly forsake them; even their iniquities shall not prevent his giving them all that good which He hath promised, since He will, in the distant lands where they are dispersed, bring them to a sense of their transgressions, and circumcising their hearts, make them objects meet to receive the mercies He hath yet in store for them ||: And we have seen, that these promises are delivered in terms too express and plain to admit of figurative interpretation †, and that there are correspondent prophecies equally clear and positive ‡, while the construction now put on them tends no less to make them consistent among themselves, than to confirm the doctrine I have attempted to establish by them. Upon the whole then, I conceive, that I may now, without incurring the charge of arguing hastily, conclude, that this assertion,

§ P. 8, 21, 23.

* P. 22.

|| P. 10, 13.

† P. 7 and throughout.

‡ P. 23, 24.

That the Scriptures do contain assurances of a final and literal restoration of the posterity of Israel to the country given by God to Abraham, and which their ancestors have heretofore inhabited, is sufficiently proved: And having drawn this conclusion, I shall proceed to enquire into those circumstances, which the sacred Writers mention, as attendant on this great event.

CHAPTER III.

Circumstances attendant on the promised restoration.

BOTH from the past fortunes of this very particular people, and from the nature of an event so extraordinary, it may justly be presumed, that their being gathered together from the very extensive dispersion in which they now exist, and restored to their antient country, must be attended with circumstances of some importance to other nations, as well as themselves: Their original acquisition of that land, which now has been for so many ages in the possession of their enemies, was made under the visible interposition of a Superiour Power, who having, with signs and wonders, delivered them from the thralldom of Egypt, did with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, overthrow before them the armies of those confederate states, on whose

whose iniquities they were appointed the instruments of the divine vengeance; and the return of two of their tribes to this land from a subsequent captivity, was preceded by the subversion of a powerful empire: While they cannot again be reinstated in the possession of their country, without depriving at least some one nation of part of its dominion, and withdrawing numerous bodies of subjects from several. But to the circumstances merely accompanying this great event, I shall not confine the present enquiry, there are others mentioned as preceding it, even at a considerable distance, so interesting in themselves, that I may, without apology, take them also into consideration. Tho' the human eye cannot always discern it, yet perfect justice must ever prevail in the Almighty's dealings with His creatures; if therefore, the return of the families of Israel will naturally be the occasion of commotions, bloodshed, and slaughter among other nations, we may certainly conclude, that it will not be brought about, till the corruption and abundant crimes of those nations call for such punishment: Again, Since the wisest œconomy is perceivable in all the operations of nature, and it is the same God which worketh all in all, we may be sure, the like will be observed in the administration of the moral world, and therefore, that the Lord will not visibly interpose, till the

state of mankind absolutely requires such interference : Neither (we may with equal certainty infer from the invariable rectitude of the Divine dealings, and His long and unspeakable forbearance) will He in a manner thus judicial interfere, without several previous warnings being given to the sons of men. Now accurately consistent with these reasonings, are the predictions left us, relative to the manners and state of the world at the time preceding that of God's assembling the scattered people.

It is well known, that the several ages during which Jerusalem already has been, or may yet be trodden down by the Gentiles, are termed in Scripture, the times of the Gentiles; and that the sacred Writers mention several general characteristics of these times, beside those particular ones contained in the predictions which form the prophetic history of the Christian Church, from its foundation to the time of the end; among both these it is, that we must search for the circumstances preceding the restoration of the Israelites; and by this search, unless I be grossly mistaken, we shall not only descry some, of which the present situation of things on the earth would warrant an expectation, even had we no other assurance of their arrival, but also discover, that there are others, which have already begun to make their appearance.

THE prophet Daniel, in his description of the latter state of the fourth great empire, when divided into several kingdoms, hath left us a sketch of what would be the political condition of that part of the world which hath formed the scene of the Israelitish story, previous to the period when God shall have accomplished to scatter the power of His people: "Whereas
 " (says he, in the interpretation which he gave
 " Nebuchadnezzar of his dream) thou sawest
 " the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and
 " part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided;
 " but there shall be in it of the strength of iron,
 " forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed
 " with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet
 " were part of iron, and part of clay, so the
 " kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly
 " broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed
 " with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves
 " with the seed of men, but they shall not
 " cleave one to another, even as iron is not
 " mixed with clay §." And in the explanation

§ Dan. ii, 41, 42, 43—The next verse begins thus "And
 " in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up
 " a kingdom, &c."—Where it is worthy of remark, that
 this can scarcely be meant of a kingdom merely spiritual,
 since that was at least beginning to be established before the
 empire afterwards prefigured to Daniel by the fourth beast,
 and here represented by the legs of the image, which were
 of iron solely, was even on the decline.

of the vision of the four beasts given to himself, we find a prophecy of ten kingdoms to arise within the peculiar limits of the last empire, and of one power of particular character, to spring up among these kingdoms, and endeavour to establish a tyranny both ecclesiastical and civil, and to the power of all which an end would be put, by the saints of the Most High taking the Kingdom*. And a similar situation of affairs on this part of the earth is predicted by St. John, as to appear in the time intervening between the division of the Roman dominions, and that great day, in which the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of God and His Christ†. The circumstance then, of this part of the globe no longer forming the body of one great empire, but being divided into several states, differing much in strength, and among which the perpetual clashing of interests keeps up constant divisions; And that of their being in the number of these, one of peculiar character, which hath, by the assistance and contribution of the others, arisen to great temporal opulence, and no small extent of absolute spiritual dominion, (when at its full height, indeed little less than universal,) may be ranked among the circumstances we are enquiring after, and considered as of those which it has been foretold,

* Dan. chap. vii.

† See Rev. xiii and xvii, and xi, 7—15.

would

would precede the final recovery of the posterity of Israel from their dispersion.

BUT we are further admonished, that before that hour there will be a most general prevalence of corruption and iniquity on the earth; vice, and its attendants hypocrisy and infidelity, will by degrees gain ground till the world is over-run with them, and its inhabitants are so taken up with the cares or pleasures of this life, so employed in the indulgences of luxury, or busied in the strife of ambition, that the voice of reason will not be heard, and the calls of religion will be despised: By this situation of things, the unsteady will be induced to relinquish their hope, and give up their patience, and through the abounding of iniquity, the love of many will wax cold: the unbeliever will become still more bold, and utter his blasphemous defiance with increasing confidence, and scarcely will there be found on earth any who yet pray, and faint not.—Thus St. Paul teaches, that

“ In the last daies perilous times shall come.
 “ For men shall be lovers of their own selves,
 “ covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, dis-
 “ obedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
 “ without natural affection, truce-breakers,
 “ false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers
 “ of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-
 “ minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers
 “ of God, having a form of godliness, but

“ knowing not the power thereof †.” And our
 Lord hath declared, that “ As it was in the daies
 “ of Noah, so shall it be also in the daies of the
 “ Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they
 “ married wives, they were given in marriage,
 “ until the day that Noah entered the ark : And
 “ the flood came, and destroyed them all. Like-
 “ wise also as it was in the daies of Lot, they
 “ did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold,
 “ they planted, they builded ; but the same day
 “ that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire
 “ and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed
 “ them all. Even thus shall it be in the day
 “ when the Son of Man is revealed §.” And St.
 Peter assures us, that “ There shall come in
 “ the last daies, scoffers, walking after their
 “ own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise
 “ of His coming? For since the fathers fell
 “ asleep, all things continue as they were from
 “ the beginning of the creation *.”

To say, that the principles and practices of
 the present day do not render such a state of
 affairs in the world improbable, would be to
 say much less than the truth ; when tender epi-
 thets, and polished titles are now invented for
 the most dissolute conduct, and abandoned prin-
 ciples. When there are so many who mock at the
 restraints of religion, and conceive all who re-

† 2 Tim. iii, 1, &c.

§ Luke xvii, 26—30.

* 2 Pet. iii, 3, 4

present the importance of its truths, and urge a serious consideration of them, to be either fools or dissemblers. When the best guards of virtue are trampled under foot, and the firmest supports of integrity are despised. When among those who profess Christianity, there are many, who are striving to explain away its essential doctrines, and prove its Divine Founder but a teacher of philosophy. When in the very bosom of that which calls itself the catholic church, somewhat little better than atheism flourishes and abounds; and when not a small portion only of mankind are in that state of society, in which corruptions like these prevail; but luxury and all the evil consequences of refinement, are, by the mean of commerce, universally diffused, and the profligacy of one nation serves for both example and countenance to another: To think, that when the manners of the world are become thus depraved, they will not be more so, that when wickedness is so prevalent, its votaries will not increase, a man must forget that vice is naturally contagious, and be, verily, little versed in either the history of his kind, or the general tenour of human conduct: And as little must he have accustomed himself to consider the laws of God's government of the moral world, who does not perceive, that to such conduct much misery is necessarily attached; that in the unalterable course of things, from the vices of
men

men will arise disturbances; that unrestrained appetites produce injuries, injuries quarrels, quarrels bloodshed; that when individuals become selfish and unjust, the nations composed of them will be the same, and thus the world become a scene of discord, violence, and slaughter.—

AND such is the scene we are taught to expect: Since the rising of nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, spoken of by our Lord, is not, I conceive, to be confined utterly to the times preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, but to be extended to the whole of that which is by the prophet Jeremiah styled “that day so great that none is like it, even “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” and the end of the tribulation of which shall be followed by the appearance of the sign of the Son of Man †. But the natural consequences of vice are due even to those who sin against the laws of natural religion; those who have been blessed with the light of revelation must be more criminal, if

† There were two questions put to our Lord: One, When Jerusalem should be destroyed? The other, What would be the signs of His coming, and of the end of the world? If then, the wretched state of the earth at large previous to his coming, and that of the land of Judea before the overthrow of its capital, would resemble each other, it is no wonder our Saviour should, in the same terms, have described some of the signs preceding both these events.

they

they corrupt themselves, and therefore, the predictions of the above evils are accompanied with menaces of others, expressive of the Divine wrath, "Great earthquakes, famines and pestilence, and fearful sights, and great signs from heaven; upon earth, distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth †." How far the times of the Gentiles have hitherto been marked by an excess either of these more common or more extraordinary evils, the history of Christendom will inform us—We there learn, that the Eastern Churches, which were the first to corrupt the purity of the gospel, and to give ear to false teachers, have been swept away by a torrent of calamities; and that the rapid progress of those barbarous nations, which overthrew them, can scarcely be described, but by borrowing the prophetic image, and saying, that "the whirlwind of the Lord" destroyed them: We may there too see, that though there were in the antient world, long and obstinate contests for empire, yet no former ages ever suffered under such extensive and destructive wars, as those which have arisen since the decay of the Roman power. When the barbarous nations began their incursions into the ci-

† Luke xxi.

vilized

vilized world, a scene of universal devastation and distress took place; not only the antient inhabitants were butchered, but the invaders fought among themselves, and in the contests of such numerous armies, every part of the empire was deluged with blood; and although this storm at length subsided, and the wandering tribes fixed their residence in different countries, yet in so doing they have formed states, several of which are so nearly equal in power, and have interests so various, that we see strength is supplied, and matter administered for perpetual contentions. While the settlements of each people in distant countries, for the purposes of commerce, render a quarrel between two neighbouring nations in these parts, the cause of discord and bloodshed in every quarter of the globe. And while the prevalence of *these* evils is too plain not to be acknowledged, but from the most incorrigible perverseness, the ages we are considering have not been without the appearance of some of the more extraordinary§, though a gradual increase of both may be expected; as well as the accession of those threatened terrors which the world may not yet have experienced.

§ For the earthquakes, and other fearful occurrences in the East, previous to the destruction of its churches, the reader may consult the late learned Bishop of Bristol's Dissertation on the Prophecies, vol. iii.

BUT

BUT in contemplating the general signs, we must not lose sight of some particular occurrences, which, it is declared, shall precede the promised restoration. The prophet Daniel, and the apostles Paul and John, have described, in characters too express to be doubted of by any but the wilfully blind, the papal hierarchy, as the source of the greatest corruptions in the Christian Church, as the abettor of idolatry, as the parent of many abominations in the countries submitting to its yoke; and have consequently threatened this power with many and heavy judgements, declaring, that though its complete overthrow would not be brought about but by the very appearance of the Lord, yet its decay would commence before, and those very states, which had raised and supported it, would unite in degrading and despoiling it*. That there have been introduced and supported in the Romish Church, doctrines most contradictory both to the spirit and letter of the Scriptures, and that idolatrous practices, are so glaringly chargeable upon her, that it has been thought necessary to omit, in several of her books of devotion, that Divine Law which forbids them, is too well known, to render the mention of particular instances here needful: And that the imposition of her absurdities and falsehoods on

* See Dan. vii, 24; xi, 36; 2 Ep. Thess. ii, 3—8; and Rev. xvii, 12—16.

the weak and ignorant, hath so disgusted many of the better informed, as to impel them into an opposite extreme, and induce them to reject all the truths of religion, because some forgeries have been passed on them as such, and thus been in fact a principal cause of the prevalence of those libertine principles, and deistical opinions, which have made so great a progress in Europe, and more especially in those countries of it, which are still under her ecclesiastical dominion, is also a fact too notorious to require particular proof; and therefore, even though she should not hereafter appear more particularly the fountain of the vicious tenets, and dissolute conduct, that may prevail in a still greater degree, yet, on account of those evils to which she hath already given occasion, as being the root from whence those still future will spring, the city where her Chief resides, is entitled to the epithet given her of "The Mother of Abominations of the Earth;" and though its inhabitants do henceforth no more than keep pace with the generality of others, in becoming more licentious and abandoned, it may well be expected to receive some marks of the Divine Displeasure, heavier than those poured on the rest of the earth. The first part, indeed, of her threatened sentence, the destined instruments have already begun to execute; our own country, which formerly contributed no small portion

tion toward the maintenance of her power and opulence, and some of whose monarchs have been numbered among the most obedient of her sons, hath not only long rent itself from her dominion, but sent forth a constant supply of powerful opponents, to combat her groundless pretences, expose her usurpations, lessen her influence, and diminish her ill-gotten and much-abused authority. Often hath he, who is favoured with the title of her Eldest Son, mocked at her representatives commands, and even made him tremble on his throne; while the monarchs, on whom have been bestowed the epithets Most Faithful, Most Catholic, and Most Apostolic, and whose predecessors have so oft imbrued their hands in blood, for the support of her authority, have of late become destroyers of the firmest props of her power, and thus far proceeded (in accomplishment of the prediction) to make her desolate and naked. The execution of the remaining and much severer parts of her sentence, continues among the yet future signs of the approach of the visible establishment of the kingdom of God; while those which we see already inflicted, afford us so many warnings to expect those which are yet to come, and to preserve ourselves from partaking of her sins, least we be involved likewise in her punishment. The same may be observed on the other signs which have appeared: Thus the prevalence of irreligion and immorality

immorality, should in all reason admonish every man to look to himself, that he be not led to contribute to the hastening of that day, when men shall be blind to the truths of religion, and have forgotten all its precepts; when darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: Thus too we may, from the calamities with which the earth is already visited, from the wars, insurrections, earthquakes, tempests, and conflagrations, from the sufferings of numberless individuals, and the distress of nations, to which our own age hath been witness, learn to dread the future miseries which the increasing wickedness of men, crying to heaven for vengeance, must bring down on the world. For great and terrible judgements are predicted, as either immediately preceding, or to be made manifest in that day, when the Lord shall arise to plead for his people, and avenge Himself on his enemies. When the light of religion being nearly extinguished, and the laws of the earth being the laws of violence; the present Christian world shall be no longer objects of forbearance, having rendered themselves, by their iniquities, ripe for destruction, and their neglect of the gospel being exaggerated, by the repeated proofs received by them of its truth, and the reiterated warnings not to forsake its faith, or precepts given them in the regular accomplishment of all its prophecies. At that time we are assured, the vials of

of God's wrath shall be poured on the earth, and particularly on that part of it whence have chiefly issued the great corruptions of the church, and on that power, which by the support and encouragement of the most false and detestable doctrines, hath given such occasion to sin and blasphemy; and that so extreme will be the incorrigibleness of the age, that these punishments will harden, in lieu of amending, those on whom they are inflicted, and make them desperate in their crimes; they will follow the maddest suggestions of impiety, and be stopped in their career of wickedness only by the utter destruction that will overwhelm them: The completion of this destruction is in Scripture represented by the image of God's taking the cup of his fury out of the hand of Jerusalem, and making the nations drink of it. As in Is. chap. li, 21, "Therefore, Hear now this, thou afflicted and drunken, but not with wine, thus saith thy Lord, the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold I have taken out of thy hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again. But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee, which have said to thy soul, Bow down, &c."—And in the 25th of Jeremiah, there is a prophecy, which though in part relating to revolutions then near at hand, and to what some of the nations therein

E named

named suffered, from the successive conquests
 of the Babylonians, and Medes, and Persians,
 yet toward the end is conceived, in terms which
 are justly applicable to no event already past,
 but betoken a more extended and compleat de-
 struction of the enemies of God, than the world
 hath yet seen.—“ For thus saith the Lord God
 “ of Israel unto me, Take the wine-cup of this
 “ fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to
 “ whom I send thee to drink it. And they shall
 “ drink and be moved, and be mad, because of
 “ the sword that I will send among them. Ver.
 “ 15, 16.—And it shall be, if they refuse to
 “ take the cup at thine hand to drink, then
 “ shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord
 “ of Hosts, Ye shall certainly drink. For lo,
 “ I begin to bring evil upon the city which is
 “ called by my name, and should ye be utterly
 “ unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished:
 “ For I will call for a sword upon the inhabi-
 “ tants of the earth, saith the Lord of Hosts.
 “ Therefore prophesy thou against them all
 “ these words, and say unto them, The Lord
 “ shall roar from on high, and utter his voice
 “ from his holy habitation. He shall give a
 “ shout, as they that tread the grapes, against
 “ all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall
 “ come even unto the ends of the earth, for the
 “ Lord hath a controversy with the nations:
 “ He will plead with all flesh, He will give
 “ them,

“ them that are wicked to the sword, saith the
 “ Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Be-
 “ hold evil shall go forth from nation to nation,
 “ and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from
 “ the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the
 “ Lord shall be at that day from one end of the
 “ earth even unto the other end of the earth :
 “ They shall not be lamented, neither gathered,
 “ nor buried, they shall be dung upon the
 “ ground.” Ver. 28—33. And the other image
 used in this last passage of the Lord’s having a
 controversy with the nations, and pleading with
 them, is used by other prophets, when foretell-
 ing the same great and fearful event : Thus
 Isaiah proclaims a warning to the nations, and
 a total overthrow of the kingdoms of the world,
 prefigured by the hosts of heaven being dissolved;
 “ Come near, ye nations, to hear, and hearken,
 “ ye people : Let the earth hear, and all that is
 “ therein ; the world, and all things that come
 “ forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord
 “ is upon all nations, and his fury upon all
 “ their armies : He hath utterly destroyed them ;
 “ He hath delivered them to the slaughter :
 “ Their slain also shall be cast out, and their
 “ stink shall come up out of their carcases, and
 “ the mountains shall be melted with their blood,
 “ and all the host of heaven shall be dissolved,
 “ and the heavens shall be rolled together as a
 “ scrole : And all their host shall fall down, as

" the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a
 " falling fig from a fig-tree. For my sword
 " shall be bathed, &c. †—For it is the day of
 " the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recom-
 " pence for the controversy of Zion."—And
 the prophet Joel, to the same purpose, " For
 " Behold, in those daies, and at that time when
 " I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and
 " Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and
 " will bring them down into the valley of Je-
 " hoshaphat, and will plead with them there for
 " my people, and for my heritage, whom they
 " have scattered among the nations, and parted
 " my land.—Proclaim ye this among the Gen-
 " tiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men,
 " let all the men of war draw near, let them
 " come up. Beat your plough-shares into swords,
 " and your pruning-hooks into spears. Let
 " the weak say, I am strong. Assemble your-
 " selves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather
 " yourselves together round about: Thither
 " cause thy mighty ones to come down, O
 " Lord. Let the heathen be weakened, and
 " come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat. For
 " there will I sit to judge all the heathen round
 " about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest
 " is ripe: Come, get ye down, for the press is
 " full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness
 " is great." Joel iii, 1, 2—9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

† Is. xxxiv, 1—5.

But

But there are, in this quotation especially, some expressions which merit particular notice, from their so accurately coinciding with other predictions, that when compared no doubt can remain of the time to which either are to be applied. In the passage before us we are assured, that God will sit to judge the heathen round about; and in the 7th chapter of the book of Daniel, ver. 26, we are told, That the judgement shall sit to take away the dominion of that tyrannical and blasphemous power, which the prophet had seen arise after the division of the last great empire. The former prophet informs us, That this shall be in the day when God shall bring again the captivity of Judah; and the latter places it at that period, when the kingdom shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: While in the 20th chapter of the Revelations, the destruction of the same power is said to be followed by the same circumstance. Again, in the prophecy of Joel, the image of an harvest and a vintage is used, and there is an allusion to the same in the words above quoted from Isaiah; in the latter part of the 14th chapter of Revelations too, the same is repeated; and in the 63d chapter of Isaiah, and the 19th of Revelations, we have revealed to us, the great Agent in this deliverance of God's people, and the punishment of his enemies—"Who is this
 " that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments

“ from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his
 “ apparel, travelling in the greatness of his
 “ strength? I that speak in Righteousness,
 “ mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in
 “ thine apparel, and thy garments like him that
 “ treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the
 “ wine-press alone, and of the people there was
 “ none with me: For I will tread them in mine
 “ anger, and trample them in my fury, and
 “ their blood shall be sprinkled upon my gar-
 “ ments, and I will stain all my raiment. For
 “ the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and
 “ the year of my Redeemed is come. And I
 “ looked, and there was none to help: And I
 “ wondered that there was none to uphold:
 “ Therefore mine own arm brought salvation
 “ unto me, and my fury it upheld me. And
 “ I will tread down the people in mine anger,
 “ and make them drunk in my fury, and I will
 “ bring their strength to the earth.”—Thus
 saith the prophet; now hear the apostle: “ And
 “ I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white
 “ horse; and He that sat upon him was called
 “ Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth
 “ He judge, and make war. His eyes were as
 “ a flame of fire, and on his head were many
 “ crowns; and He had a name written that no
 “ one knew but Himself: And He was clothed
 “ with a vesture dipped in blood: And his
 “ name is called The Word of God. And the
 “ armies

“ armies which were in heaven followed Him
 “ on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white
 “ and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a
 “ sharp sword, that with it He should smite the
 “ nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of
 “ iron: and He treadeth the wine press of the
 “ fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And
 “ He hath on his vesture, and on his thigh a
 “ name written, King of Kings, and Lord of
 “ Lords.” It is needless to transcribe all the
 parallel passages in which the same circumstances
 of this signal vengeance, to be taken on a wicked
 world, are predicted, by the antient or the later
 prophets; suffice it to say, that as in the parti-
 culars already repeated, so do they agree in
 others, even to the mentioning of the same spot,
 as the great scene of slaughter †.

LET us now turn from the contemplation of
 this distressful scene, which will be wholly dis-
 closed, when the measure of our iniquities is
 full, to view an event of far different kind, the
 consequent grand completion of the prophecies,
 that the gospel shall be preached to all nations,
 and all the ends of the earth turn unto the Lord,
 till it be full of the knowledge of Him, as the
 waters cover the sea, and all the nations of it
 be blessed in the seed of Abraham; for though
 the gospel, on its first publication, quickly ex-

† Compare Joel iii, 14: Rev. xvi, 16; and see the
 Notes of Drusius and L. Cappellus on this last passage.

tended itself through the Roman world, and the voice of its preachers had, even in the apostolic age, reached to what were then esteemed the ends of the earth, yet its reception, in point either of universality or sincerity, has not been hitherto by any mean adequate to what the Scriptures teach us to expect; the royal Psalmist declares, that "all the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall kneel before Him." Pl. xxii, 27.—And in the 72d Psalm we find him, when describing the prosperity of his son Solomon's reign, carried on by the spirit of prophecy to the mention of that Son, of whose greatness the glories of this formed but a faint shadow, saying, "Yea; all kings shall fall down before Him: All nations shall serve Him." And among the prophecies of Isaiah we meet the following most solemn declaration, that the God of Israel shall be universally worshipped; "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth: For I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear §." The same full conversion of the nations is thus spoken of by Jeremiah, "O Lord, my strength, &c.—the Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends

§ Is. xlv, 22, 23.

“ of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers
 “ have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein
 “ there is no profit * !” And by the prophet
 Malachi thus—“ From the rising of the sun
 “ unto the going down of the same, my name
 “ shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every
 “ place incense shall be offered unto my name,
 “ and a pure offering: For my name shall be
 “ great among the heathen, saith the Lord of
 “ Hosts †.” And Daniel saw “ given unto the
 “ Son of Man, dominion, and glory, and a
 “ kingdom, that all peoples, and nations, and
 “ languages should serve Him ‡.” That these
 predictions have not yet had their full comple-
 tion, I need not take pains to demonstrate; it is
 plain, that no small part of the world still con-
 tinues in the darkness of paganism; another por-
 tion of it is at open enmity with the gospel, while
 the countries which profess to receive it, cannot
 well be said to offer a *pure* offering: When
 then are we to look for this accomplishment?
 Is the example of the present generation of those
 who are within the church such, that we may
 hope, it will have power to work a change in
 the sentiments of those without? Or, Are there
 now any appearances which will warrant a pre-
 sumption, that the next, or succeeding genera-
 tion of Christians will, by the light of their
 good works, lead the rest of mankind to glorify

* Jer. xvi, 19. † Mal. i, 11. ‡ Dan. vii, 14.

the Divine Author of their religion? Or, Must we not rather look for some great revolution, some wonderful alteration, something not less than Divine interposition, ere these prophecies can be fulfilled? Here our adversaries perhaps may sarcastically reply, that *indeed we must*. But let us be of good courage, the state of the Jews in Cæsar's time was not such as to raise an imagination, that from among them would spring those who would gain a victory over the established superstitions of the Roman world, and make the empire converts to their doctrines; The Christian communion hath from its institution tallied with its great Founder's declarations concerning it; the good and the bad have been gathered into it, and though the Chosen be few, the Called have been many. The time prefixed for extending the call still further, is not yet arrived; for this is an event closely attendant on that of the scattered people's being gathered together, since it is ever spoken of as bringing goodwill and honour to that nation; but hitherto the progress of the gospel among the Gentiles hath little else than spread their disgrace, and contributed to bring on them aversion and contempt: The blessings we have hitherto received through them, have come to us by their fall; and the times which they have yet seen, bear no resemblance to that scene which the prophet describes in the following and similar

lar passages—" Arise, shine, for thy light is
 " come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon
 " thee. For behold darkness shall cover the
 " earth, and thick darkness the people. But
 " the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory
 " shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles
 " shall come to thy light, and kings to the
 " brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes
 " round about, and see; all they gather them-
 " selves together, they come to thee, thy sons
 " shall come from far, and thy daughters shall
 " be nursed at thy side. Then shalt thou see,
 " and flow together, and thine heart shall fear,
 " and be enlarged, because the abundance of
 " the sea shall be converted unto thee, and the
 " forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee §."

To this diffusion of the knowledge of God, I conceive, an allusion is made in the 12th chapter of Daniel, ver. 4, where the prophet is commanded to seal the book until the time of the end, (*i. e.* the end of the wonders then revealed,) and it is added, in our translation, " Many shall
 " run to and fro, and knowledge shall be in-
 " creased;" but in that of the Seventy, " till
 " many be taught, and knowledge be increa-
 " sed*." Perfectly too do the predictions of the New Testament agree with those of the Old, in

§ If. lx, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

* On reviewing however, Mede's interpretation of this passage, I will not presume to maintain that given above against it.

connect-

connecting these two events, the gathering together of the Jews, and the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles; though an appearance of inaccuracy has been introduced into St. Paul's declaration on that head, in the 11th chapter of his epistle to the Romans, by the manner in which our translations have there rendered the Aorist: From the apostle's words, in the 12th and 15th verses, it should seem, that the receiving of the Jews should be at least cotemporary with the complete conversion of the Gentiles; for "Now, says he, If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles, How much more their fullness?" And again, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Whereas by the 25th verse, as the text now stands, we are taught, that the coming of the fullness of the Gentiles must precede the recovery of Israel; for thus the words run, "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles *be come in*." Now if we here read "until the fulness of the Gentiles *come in*," the several declarations are consistent, since the events may be synchronical; but while the completive particle *be* is retained, there will

will remain an appearance of disagreement, which exists not in the original (where there is *ἕως*) and the very phrase employed, in which is, in another epistle of the same apostle, translated as it should have been here; for in the 1 Cor. xi, 26, "*ἕως ἃς ἔλθῃ*," is rendered "until He (the Lord) come."—And had this been attended to, it might probably have prevented any mistake of the meaning of the term fulness, when applied to the Gentiles, and it would have been understood of that great body of them, whose accession to the church has been so repeatedly foretold, and the call of whom, I apprehend, is further presignified in the 14th chapter of the Revelations, where (with however the sincerest deference for the opinion of the learned favourers of a different interpretation) I can but think, that the angel, represented as flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, and saying with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgement is come, &c." is an emblem of the manifestation of the truth of the gospel to the most distant nations of the earth, to be given by the infliction of those judgements on the corrupted Christian World, and its enemies of every sort, which are soon after described. Indeed, with such earnestness do the sacred

Writers

Writers look forward to this compleat establishment of the kingdom of God, that they have prepared, as it were, formularies of thanksgiving adapted to the time; such a song is put into the mouth of Judah, in the 26th chapter of Isaiah, the prophet having, in the foregoing chapter, mentioned God's vengeance on his enemies, and joined with it a declaration, that He will destroy the covering cast over the face of all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations; and such appear to be, particularly the 97th and 98th Psalms, the one beginning "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof!" And the other testifying, "That He hath done marvellous things: His right hand, and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory;—that He hath remembered his mercy toward the house of Israel, and that all the ends of the earth have seen his salvation*."

HAVING thus laid before the Reader, part of the predictions, which specify various circumstances as preceding, or accompanying the grand event of Israel's restoration, I shall conclude my enquiry with the consideration of some others, noted by the prophets as subsequent thereto.

* The 103d Psalm seems to allude too to the same event.

CHAPTER IV,

In which those prophecies are reviewed, which mention circumstances subsequent to the final return of Israel.

I AM now to consider predictions, than which none have been the subject of more different sentiments. An apparently close agreement between an antient tradition, and various passages of Scripture gave early rise to an opinion, that our Lord would reign on earth with his saints for a period of 1000 years, and the colouring (if I may so call it) of this hypothesis soon became sufficiently luxuriant to make a finished picture of Epicurean indulgence, rather than a representation of a kingdom of righteousness: Such misconstruction and abuse of the promises of the Scripture gave many great offence, and some turned from with so inveterate disgust, as to run into the other extreme, and deny the futurity of any reign of religion and happiness on earth. Different have been the opinions formed by later interpreters on these opposite doctrines; some have embraced the latter, while others have in various degrees supported the former: To hold with the first, we must directly contradict some of the most express declarations of Scripture,

Scripture, as appears from many texts already quoted in this work ; while it must be acknowledged, that the sentiments of the others are often attended with difficulties not easily resolved : In considering, therefore, the prophecies relating to this subject, I shall first state what I conceive to be clearly foretold, and then represent, as impartially as I can, the most material difficulties that occur on either side of the question, adding the solutions of those which appear to be answerable. It is then expressly predicted, that the state of the restored people shall be both happy and glorious, and that the peace which they shall enjoy, shall extend to all the nations of the earth, the whole globe acknowledging one King, and one Lord, even Christ, and that from this state they shall never be ejected ; for though at the close of a determinate period, an attempt shall be made to interrupt their happiness, that attempt shall miscarry by the visible interposition of Divine Power, and prove only the forerunner of this age of temporal felicity being changed for endless happiness. Thus the Lord hath declared by Isaiah—“ And I will
 “ turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge
 “ away thy dross, and take away all thy tin ; and
 “ I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy
 “ counsellours as at the beginning : Afterward
 “ thou shalt be called the city of righteousness,
 “ the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed
 “ with

“ with judgement, and her converts with right-
 “ teousness.” Is. i, 25, 6, 7.—And in the 62d
 chapter, “ And the Gentiles shall see thy right-
 “ teousness, and all kings thy glory : And thou
 “ shalt be called by a new name, which the
 “ mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also
 “ be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord,
 “ and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.”

And by Jeremiah it is thus proclaimed, as to
 be accomplished in the latter daies—“ Again I
 “ will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O
 “ virgin of Israel, thou shalt again be adorned
 “ with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the
 “ dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt
 “ yet plant vines upon the mountains of Sa-
 “ maria, the planters shall plant them, and eat
 “ them as common things.” Jer. xxxi, 4, 5.
 “ And ver. 12, “ Therefore they shall come,
 “ and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow
 “ together to the goodness of the Lord, for
 “ wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the
 “ young of the flock, and of the herd : And
 “ their soul shall be as a watered garden ; and
 “ they shall not sorrow any more at all, &c.”

And by the prophet Hosea, “ And in that day I
 “ will make a covenant for them, with the
 “ beasts of the field, and with the fowls of hea-
 “ ven, and with the creeping things of the
 “ ground, and I will break the bow and the
 “ sword, and the battle out of the earth, and

" will make them lie down safely.—And it shall
 " come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, I
 " will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the
 " earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and
 " the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear
 " Jezreel." Hosea ii, 18—21, 22. And the
 same state of prosperity Joel thus foretells,
 " And it shall come to pass in that day, that
 " the mountains shall drop down new wine, and
 " and the hills shall flow with milk, and all
 " the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters—
 " Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem
 " from generation to generation." Joel iii, 18—
 20. And Amos thus, " Behold the daies come,
 " saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall
 " overtake the reaper, and the treader of the
 " grapes, him that soweth seed; and the moun-
 " tains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills
 " shall melt—And I will plant them (the peo-
 " ple of Israel) upon their land, and they shall
 " no more be pulled up out of their land which
 " I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." Amos ix, 13—15. These are strong images of
 a long duration of earthly prosperity, fixed both
 by the tenour of these, and the express words of
 other predictions, to the time when this chosen
 people shall acknowledge their Messiah; thus
 in the 37th of Ezekiel, ver. 21, " Thus saith
 " the Lord God, Behold, I will take the chil-
 " dren of Israel, from among the heathen, whi-
 " ther

"ther they be gone, and will gather them on
 "every side, and bring them into their own land
 "—And David my servant shall be king over
 "them: And they shall have one Shepherd—
 "and they shall dwell in the land that I have
 "given unto Jacob, wherein your fathers have
 "dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they
 "and their children and their children's child-
 "dren for ever; and my servant David shall be
 "their prince for ever." And that this age of
 felicity shall extend itself over the whole earth,
 and all nations acknowledge the dominion, and
 taste the blessings of the reign of Christ, is testi-
 fied by various passages of Scripture, as in the
 72d Psalm already quoted, in several prophecies
 of Isaiah, in the book of Daniel, and other parts
 of Holy Writ, which it is needless here to enu-
 merate. Indeed, unless we look forward to a
 future manifestation of the light of the gospel
 to those nations among whom it hath not yet
 been preached, the grand dispensation carrying
 on in the world will appear imperfect in one of
 its parts: The evidence of the truth of the gos-
 pel was first laid before the Jews, and they were
 called on to receive its doctrines, but this they
 refused, and were consequently punished for their
 disobedience to the Divine Command: It was
 then offered to a portion of the Gentiles, who
 acknowledged its authority, but soon beginning
 to corrupt its doctrines, and becoming by de-

grees less and less mindful of its precepts, they too were overtaken by the vengeance of heaven: Among the north-western nations, the knowledge of Christianity made a slower progress; it hath reached them however, and this is the day of their trial †. Still there remains a large portion of the world, to whom the voices of its preachers have never reached; shall we think that these will escape the probation through which all others have gone? Or only suppose that the time of it is yet future? The last supposition is most reasonable in itself, and most favoured by Scripture, since it is declared therein, that, as the gospel shall be preached to the distant nations, and all the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, so, they of the distant nations shall, at the end of a thousand years, make an attempt to interrupt the happiness of the restored people, and thereby draw down on themselves the most signal judgments: Thus Ezekiel, after having foretold the final return of Judah and Israel to their own land, proceeds, “ And the word of

† To some of these nations indeed the gospel was first made known in a very imperfect manner; nay, what was then preached to them was so different from the doctrine promulgated by the apostles, that had they received no further information, they could never be justly accused of forsaking that doctrine; but this deficiency the reformation has supplied, and they have by that had the genuine laws of the gospel, and their sanctions so clearly propounded to them, that no plea remains to excuse their neglect thereof.

“ the

“ the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man,
 “ set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog,
 “ the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; and
 “ prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the
 “ Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O
 “ Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal
 “ —Be thou prepared, and prepare thyself, thou
 “ and all thy companies that are assembled unto
 “ thee, and be thou a guard unto them. After
 “ many daies, thou shalt be visited: In the lat-
 “ ter daies, thou shalt come into the land that
 “ is brought back from the sword, and is ga-
 “ thered out of many people, against the moun-
 “ tains of Israel, which have been always waste;
 “ but it is brought forth out of the nations, and
 “ they shall dwell safely all of them.—Thus
 “ saith the Lord, In that day, when my people
 “ Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?
 “ And thou shalt come from thy place out of the
 “ north parts, thou and many people with thee,
 “ all of them riding upon horses, a great com-
 “ pany, and a mighty army, And thou shalt
 “ come up against my people Israel as a cloud
 “ to cover the land, it shall be in the latter
 “ daies, and I will bring thee against my land,
 “ that the heathen may know me, when I shall
 “ be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their
 “ eyes—And it shall come to pass at the same
 “ time, when Gog shall come against the land of
 “ Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall

“ come up in my face.—And I will call for a
 “ sword against him throughout all my moun-
 “ tains, saith the Lord God. Every man’s sword
 “ shall be against his brother. And I will plead
 “ against him with pestilence, and with blood,
 “ and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands,
 “ and upon the many people that are with him,
 “ an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire
 “ and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself,
 “ and sanctify myself, and I will be known in
 “ the eyes of many nations, and they shall
 “ know, that I am the Lord †.” What is thus
 declared in terms so express by Ezekiel, is re-
 peated in language no less plain by St. John,
 who testifies, that “ When the thousand years
 “ of the reign of Christ and his saints are ex-
 “ pired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,
 “ and shall go out to deceive the nations which
 “ are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and

† Ezek. chap. xxxviii. In the course of this prediction,
 viz. ver. 17, it is declared, That this is the enemy, of
 whose attempts to interrupt the happiness of the restored
 house of Israel, former prophets had spoken: Of these
 Isaiah is one, in his 30th chapter, from the 27th verse;
 and it may be thought, that some of those prophecies which
 I have applied to another and earlier day of vengeance, are
 applicable to this; if they be so, as I have already stated
 the ground on which I made the first application of them,
 I can only here add, that the events being alike in their na-
 ture, and the subjects being Gentiles, the prophets may
 have spoken of both in the same passages.

“ Magog

“ Magog to gather them together to battle : The
 “ number of whom is as the sand of the sea,
 “ and they went up (says the apostle) upon the
 “ breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp
 “ of the saints about : And fire came down from
 “ heaven, and devoured them §. Immediately
 after which the great Deceiver of the human
 race shall be finally banished into the place of
 torment prepared for him ; the judgement shall
 sit, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, to be
 rewarded according to their works ; death and
 the grave shall be destroyed ; and the heaven and
 earth which now are, being to be found no more,
 those who shall prove acceptable in the sight of
 their all-seeing Judge shall be translated to a
 new earth, on which sorrow shall have no place,
 where pain shall not be known, but the happi-
 ness of its inhabitants shall be perfect in its kind,
 and endless in its duration.

HAVING thus stated those predictions, which
 I conceive to be so clear, that they cannot, with
 any show of reason, be controverted, I will now
 lay before the Reader that prophecy relating to
 this time, which is attended with so great diffi-
 culties. It is to be found in the 20th chapter
 of the Revelations, the 4th and 5th verses of
 which run thus—“ And I saw thrones, and them
 “ that sat upon them, and judgement was given
 “ unto them : And I saw the souls of them that

§ Rev. xx, 7, 8, &c.

“ were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and
 “ for the word of God, and which had not
 “ worshipped the beast, neither his image, nei-
 “ ther received his mark upon their foreheads,
 “ or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned
 “ with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of
 “ the dead lived not again until the thousand
 “ years were finished. This is the first resur-
 “ rection.” These words, it must be acknow-
 ledged, are strong, and as the second resurrec-
 tion afterward mentioned, ver. 13, and to which
 this is opposed in point of time, is on all hands
 allowed to be literal, that may be esteemed some
 ground for thinking this to be so likewise.—
 While the correspondence between the declara-
 tion here made, and that in the 7th of Daniel,
 ver. 22 ; and our Lord’s promise to his apostles,
 that when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne
 of his glory, they also shall sit upon twelve
 thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, ap-
 pear in some measure to justify such interpre-
 tation. But, on the other hand, it is urged,
 that mention is here made of the souls only,
 whereas a literal and proper resurrection is never
 in the whole New Testament represented but by
 the living of the dead, or the rising of the body ;
 and it is well known, that in Scripture, a moral
 and metaphorical resurrection is often spoken of ;
 that indeed shewn to Ezekiel in his vision, ch.
 xxxvii, and which most accurately corresponds

as to time with this of St. John, is plainly figurative only; at the same time that the understanding this to be literal necessarily involves us in some difficulties: For with what body shall those who have suffered for the witness of Jesus come? As children of the resurrection, they should be like the angels in heaven, and have spiritual bodies; but then, What need of the change spoken of by St. Paul, as to be made when the last trump shall sound†? These and other questions, not easy to be answered, are put on this side; to which it may be added, that the saints spoken of by Daniel, seem to be the body of the holy people, who are said, ver. 27, to possess the kingdom; and the second death, mentioned by St. John, clearly differs much from the first, whereby the presumptive argument for the first resurrection's being a literal one, because the second is so, may seem to be weakened—Yet it may justly be replied, on the other side, that a moral resurrection, as from sin unto righteousness, or a metaphorical one, as from adversity to a state of prosperity, can have no place here, since the souls of the mar-

† Since writing this passage, I think, I perceive that the last trump mentioned by St. Paul, is the seventh of those spoken of in the Revelations, and therefore to sound before the commencement of the Millennium; how far this will lessen the difficulty, without we embrace the tenet, that the whole period of the 1000 years is the *dies judicii magni*, I leave others to determine.

tyrs are not buried in sin, nor themselves now forsaken and persecuted*.

To these real are added, by the writers on the subject, various fancied difficulties, which have arisen merely from the mistakes of either the impugnors or supporters of the literal interpretation of the above text. Thus Dr. Whitby writes, that according to the words of St. John, All that are blessed and holy, and over whom the second death hath no power, have a part in this resurrection †; whereas the apostle does in truth only say, That all those who have a part therein are blessed and holy ‡, and free from the power of the second death; an assertion widely different from that which this learned commentator conceived to have been made: And thus

* There is another passage of Scripture, which some may think in favour of this side—It is in the 15th of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians, where the apostle, speaking of the resurrection, saith, That every one shall be raised in his own order, and then particularises three periods; one of which is already past, that of Christ's resurrection; the second is the resurrection of those who are Christ's, at His coming; (ἡ ἡμετέρα αἰών) the last is the time of the end, "*When Death* being destroyed," He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even The Father.—What support this passage may afford the hypothesis, I leave to others more able to determine.

† See Whitby's Treatise on the True Millennium, ch. iii. § 1.

‡ See Rev. xx, ver. 6.

too Dr. Burnet §, on the opposite side, by placing, in contradiction to the express testimony of the sacred text, the scene of this millenary reign on the new earth, feigns the present to be consumed before she gives up the rest of her dead. Indeed great confusion hath been introduced into this question, and much unnecessary controversy hath arisen from most of the writers on it not attending to the order of the apostle's prophetic narration. There have been texts cited in support of various ideas concerning the blessings of the Millennium, which relate not at all to that period; but to one subsequent thereto, and which is moreover distinguished from it by the most decisive marks. From the figurative description of the heavenly Jerusalem, occasion hath been taken to paint the future glories of that on this earth, and much fruitless ingenuity hath been displayed in endeavouring to reconcile what the apostle says of a new world to the state of the present at a future period. The synchronisms of the Revelations end at the close of the time common to them all, that of the 1260 daies; from thence the prophecy proceeds in a regular narration, declaring, that When the vengeance first threatened to be taken on the enemies of God is past, there will be a manifestation of an age of peace and happiness

§ See his appendix *De futura Judaeorum Restauratione*, ch. i. at the end of his treatise *De Statu Mort. & Resur.*

on earth, to interrupt which an attempt will be made at the end of a thousand years by many nations, led on by a distant and powerful one, but the impious purposes of these being overthrown, by the Divine Interposition, and the day of final judgement being come, the destruction of death and the grave shall follow by the general resurrection; and the earth and heaven flying from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, the dead, small and great, shall be judged according to their works, and all things be made new. In this new state, shewn to the apostle in his vision, he tells us, that he saw on the new earth no sea, and among those who dwell on it, there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain; that the evils under which the human race here suffer from the fall, shall not there be known, and the good of which they are thereby deprived, shall be restored; for in the heavenly Jerusalem, there shall be no more curse, and the tree of life shall flourish therein: These surely are blessings which belong to all the redeemed part of the race of Adam, but which we cannot expect, till the restoration of mankind be completed, when the image of the Creatour being fully renewed in them, the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, under which we both know and feel it now groaneth, and travaileth in pain, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

I HAVE now gone through the proposed enquiry into the principal prophecies relating to the final restoration of the Israelites, and some, in which are mentioned particular circumstances, either preceding, concomitant, or subsequent to that event; but I cannot take leave of the Reader, without begging him to turn with me his attention to the character of that dispensation, the knowledge of which is conveyed to us through the writings that contain these predictions. For whether we contemplate its end, the power with which the manifestation of it hath been conducted, the instruments used in it, or the ground on which those instruments were chosen, we equally meet with the most visible traces of the Divine Attributes, and see a glorious display of mercy, truth, and omnipotence. To recover a fallen race by means that are consistent with the dictates of eternal wisdom and immutable equity; to extirpate sin, and its attendant misery from the world, and to raise such a portion of the human species as, should prove themselves fit subjects for the Divine Beneficence, to a state of exalted and durable felicity, are surely purposes fully consistent with the
higheſt

highest ideas we entertain of the perfections of the Creatour and Sovereign of the universe. While the fact assumed, that men are in a corrupted state, and are become creatures imperfect in their kind, and which would in the whole of their existence, were it limited to the present state, fall short of the glory of God, exhibiting very inadequate signs of his government, is too well supported, by the scene the world presents, to be disproved by the subtlest reasonings of disputative philosophy. Neither is there less force in those proofs of the Divine Interference which have been exhibited, in the resistless manner in which the gradual manifestation of the will of heaven on this head hath been extended through so many nations: To convince mankind, that from God Himself, and no other, this counsel sprang, events were promised, which were so far from being probable, from the state of the world at the time that they were foretold, or liable to be described by human foresight, that for their accomplishment it was necessary that several circumstances should be furnished by the means of various agents, in different nations and in different ages: Monarchies were to be established, and overthrown, whole regions to be civilized, and those who had never heard of the God of Israel, or his people, were to be important agents in fulfilling his decrees: Sometimes the truth of all the prophecies yet unaccomplished, has appeared

peared to depend on the determination of a single person, totally unacquainted with their purport: Nor was the period during which the success of Haman's mischievous intention continued doubtful, the only one at which the credit of no small portion of the predictions appeared to hang, as it were, by a thread; had Hannibal made that use of his victory at Cannæ, which might have been expected from a General both able and so inveterate against the Romans, all those events in which it had been declared, that people should be, and in which they have since been, instruments, had probably never come to pass.—At one time, we see the peace of the earth essentially forwarding the knowledge of this dispensation; at another, wars and tumults yield testimony of its truth.—In some ages, the faith hath gained ground by the prosperity of its professors; in others, their sufferings have furthered its propagation: And if we trace it from its small beginnings in Chaldaea, when confined to a family few in number, and observe how, from the single stock of Abraham, millions of witnesses have arisen to its truth; and how the kings of the earth have busied themselves about this race, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, while the Divine Providence, over-ruling with ineffable majesty their intents to the accomplishment of his promises, hath continued even unto this hour, the
course

course of events in the channel before marked out, the supreme dignity, with which this dispensation hath been carried on, and the omnipotence of the Hand which hath conducted it, cannot fail to impress on our hearts, a conviction of the truth and justness of these words, spoken by the prophet in the name of the God of Israel, "This is the purpose that is purposed
 " upon the whole earth ; and this is the hand
 " that is stretched out upon all nations—For
 " the Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and Who
 " shall disannul it ? And His hand is stretched
 " out, and Who shall turn it back ?" But while others have been thus made instruments in a work of which they were totally unapprized, the chosen people themselves have been more peculiarly, nay, totally employed as such ; for even from the day of their separation from the rest of mankind unto this day, they have been signs unto the world ; and in His government of them, God hath more especially manifested his loving-kindness, judgement, and righteousness : Their history abounds with events calculated to attract the attention of the surrounding nations, and incite them to enquire into the cause of circumstances so singular, and if in making this enquiry the most rational mode be pursued, and the public records of the people be perused, the enquirer at once becomes informed, that he is materially interested in the
 truths

truths therein manifested, and that the Almighty Creatour of the universe has, through chosen persons of their nation, called on all mankind to attend to the proofs of his supremacy exhibited in the story of this race, and to give Him the glory due unto Him alone: While too the circumstances thus powerfully tending to excite enquiry, and work conviction, have been at the same time no less calculated for the extension of both; since the wonders wrought on them being confined to neither their own country, nor that of the adjoining nations, distant lands, and various regions have become witnesses unto them. Placed in a portion of the earth which successively became subject to four different empires, the knowledge of their claim to the peculiar patronage of heaven, and of all the consequences of their misbehaviour under the opportunity of gaining the blessings which would thence have flowed, hath spread to the East and to the West, to the North, and to the South—Dispersed by the judgements justly executed on them among the most learned and inquisitive nations of the world, their records and their oracles have been submitted to the strictest examination, and the severest scrutiny: Nothing hath been omitted, that could prevail on men to look carefully into these; nothing neglected, that could warrant a full conviction of their truth.—From the first hath this people dwelt alone; separate from all

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others

others do they still continue; as singular in their past fortunes, as in their present situation; oppression, captivity, and dispersion have on them failed of their usual effects: Those who have been employed in the execution of heaven's decrees against them, have been long swallowed up by other and victorious nations; Assyria and Babylon are blotted out of the catalogue of the peoples, and, What are the remains of the Grecian or Roman empires? But the undoubted posterity of Israel still continue innumerable, and capable of being made both subjects and instruments of future mercies. The assurance of everlasting kindness given to their fathers, hath never been forgotten: For near 4000 years have their fortunes tallied with their designation, and the outline of their then future circumstances sketched by the great Minister of their Law, before they first took possession of the land of Canaan, hath been so far accurately filled up; there now remains, in comparison with what is past, little but blessing, and a glorious rest; for, as when the fig-tree putteth forth her leaves, we know that the summer is at hand, so may we from the most unequivocal signs now gain assurance, that much the greater portion of that period is already past, during which the stock of Israel is to lie bare and neglected: And since however ill this race in general may have behaved under the advantages which they have enjoyed,

enjoyed, there is no good ground for presuming, that had any other nation passed through similar circumstances, its conduct would have been less censurable, and they have borne the punishment of their sins, and by their unparalleled sufferings been means of manifesting God's judgement and righteousness to men, we should seem to conclude* rather unworthily of Divine Benevolence, were we to think, that there are not blessings still in store for them, or that they will not yet become subjects of His goodness, and exhibit, in some future situation, proofs of His mercy, as resplendent, as those which *have been given in them of His justice, are terrible.*— After the great things that are said of Israel, after his having been chosen by the Lord, and having received the promise of never-failing patronage, Is there no hope in his end? Shall he have it with Amalek, and perish for ever? Or in this case, Would the prophet have wished that his own last end should be like his †? But moreover, all such suppositions are inconsistent with the ground on which this race was chosen for God's peculiar people ‡; it was because He loved their fathers, that He chose their seed after them. Abraham, whose descendants were to have the glory of conveying such blessings to

* See, in support of this reasoning, the conclusion of the passage from Jeremiah, quoted above, p. 24.

† Numbers xxiii, 10.

‡ Deut. iv, 37.

mankind, obtained this distinguished honour for his seed, and the assurance that the Lord would be their God, and they should be His people, by his own conduct, manifesting the most implicit obedience to the will, and the most perfect confidence in the truth and goodness of his Creatour; attaching himself entirely to this service, throwing the care of all his fortunes on his providence, he left his kindred, relinquished his connections, and would without hesitation have sacrificed even the son of his hopes at the Divine Command: Thus the great work of faith, to be rewarded is already past, while the everlasting kindness promised as its recompence must have failed, if the race be for ever abandoned: That it is not, however, its present existence in the state heretofore predicted is a sufficient assurance; while the indications given of the approach of its final deliverance, and all the concomitant circumstances are such, that to require plainer, would equal the perverseness of that generation before which the miracles of our Lord were wrought, who obstinately demanded of Him a sign from heaven, as a proof of His being the Messiah, when it had, at the request of their fathers, been particularly promised, that no such should accompany the preaching of that prophet, who was to come into the world §.—The whole dispensation hath been laid before us, by the

§ Deut. xviii, 15, 16.

spirit

spirit of prophecy, and the great event hath been predicted; What then is the sign of the approach of that event, as all things appearing in progress thereto? The more accurately the manner in which the successive circumstances that form the parts of this great whole are foretold, is investigated, the more wonderful, the more plainly divine does the work appear: The figurative language of prophecy, and its emblematical descriptions, are equally calculated to mark with precision the several events when they come to pass, and to keep men till then so far in the dark, that the enthusiast or the designing may not be tempted to endeavour to hasten accomplishments they see predicted; and though all the circumstances from the first to the last, particularly interesting to the Jewish or Christian church, and the various states of those parts of the world, which have been or shall be the scene of their fortunes, be most justly delineated, yet nothing is promised, or mentioned as to be brought about in the carrying on, or perfecting of this dispensation, which can at all interfere to prevent the fates of any particular nation being adapted to its deserts, but the conduct of the whole here revealed is consistent with the most equitable adjustment of all its parts. Mistakes indeed have been made in interpreting the declarations of the sacred Writers, and many who have hence learned to wait in the most ardent

expectation of events, have been greatly disappointed; let us not, however, be misled by their fate, since we cannot reasonably be discouraged at it; for it is not by the event only that their interpretations have been proved erroneous; a review of the common source of their information and our own will soon demonstrate to us, that their ideas were hastily taken up in opposition to the express warning of the apostles, and direct contradiction to the words of Scripture. If we look attentively to these, and consider the periods therein marked, and compare the succession of events with the prophetic declarations, we shall perceive, that they have gradually unfolded themselves in the order foretold; and finding that we can trace the line of circumstances the prophets have drawn, discover, that in lieu of the predictions being vague, and the accomplishment of them imaginary, (as our adversaries, with almost unparalleled effrontery, assert) they are most accurate*, and that we are in truth

* As to the repetition which a writer already noticed seems to think might be made of the words of Cicero, on those prophecies which define the time by daies or weeks, *Quæ tandem ista angustatio est, annorum potius quam aut mensium aut dierum?* it should be noticed, that from the establishment of the Mosaic economy, the Israelites were taught to expound a day as the emblem of a year, and this mode of interpretation was afterward confirmed; in proof of which the reader may consult Num. xiv, 34, and Ezek. iv, 6.

surrounded

furrounded with realities: Awful is the period
 in which we live; the children of Israel have
 now been, as foretold, "many daies, without
 "a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice,
 "without an image, without an ephod, and
 "without teraphim; and a proverb, and a bye-
 "word, among all the nations, whither they
 "are scattered:"—The dominions of the fourth
 great empire are now divided into smaller states,
 differing in strength, and perpetually at vari-
 ance with each other; and among these there
 hath arisen a power diverse from the others, who
 hath magnified himself above all, neither hath
 he regarded the God of his fathers, but hath
 honoured saints-mediators, hath forbidden to
 marry, and commanded to abstain from meats;
 wonderful has been the support which, in per-
 fect consonance with the predictions, this power
 hath received from those around him, and that,
 no less conformably with the prophecies, is now
 in great part withdrawn, their love changed into
 hatred, and their obedience into acts of enmity:
 Jerusalem hath already been for many ages trod-
 den down by the Gentiles, and by wars, and
 rumours of wars, by distress of nations, and ex-
 tensive calamities, have these ages been strongly
 marked.—What rests then, but to draw the
 proper, the only just conclusion from what we
 have seen, and do see; that as the words of the
 prophets have hitherto been regularly fulfilled,
 they

they will continue so to be, and all the wonders predicted, but not yet revealed, will be in their season exhibited: The most powerful admonitions, the most apposite signs of this we have received from the past, and are still supplied with from the present; and, Can we reasonably require more? Or, Shall we await more alarming appearances to excite our attention? If in propagating a truth among mankind as among moral beings, who are bound to receive or reject it at their own peril, the evidence given be sufficient to convince the honest and candid, and to convict those who refuse to listen unto it, of wilful blindness, and a criminal rejection, What need of further? And, if men themselves, and the common powers of the elements be instruments adequate to the execution of the judgments of God on a wicked world, Wherefore should we expect any other means to be used in the accomplishment of His decrees †? We are

† The arguments which some have attempted to draw, to the prejudice of some of the Christian prophecies, from the events in which they are accomplished, being but the effects of natural causes, are worthy only of the ingenuity of their framers: For however natural an event may be, its coming to pass may as justly be marked as a sign or notice of the approach of something subsequent, as if it were of the most miraculous kind; since it is not as being prior in the order of causes, but merely as a circumstance previous in point of time that it is mentioned: While such events being foretold at so great a distance of time, not only at a period when human knowledge and experience were less than

not warranted by the prophetic writings to look for the use of any but such until the appearance of the Lord Himself, yet to the increase of these we are frequently warned to attend, and if we will but receive it, *the corruptions now prevalent in the world, and the various calamities of which the earth is now the theatre, form a portion of the very signs, that were to appear in the latter times†.* Herein then we may behold the power of that word, which cutteth like a two-edged sword, since both those who attend to, and those who scoff at these signs, are constrained by it, to testify the truth of the prophets, who have predicted their appearance; the first by a plain ac-

than at present, but by men who enjoyed not even the degree of instruction afforded by the age in which they lived sufficiently testifies, that their predictions were dictated by a spirit of more than human prescience. That men who are backward to receive the doctrines of Christianity, because they are unwilling to submit to its precepts, should endeavour to divert their minds by such reasonings from the terrors which the apparent approach of the predicted interference of heaven must bring on them, is by no mean surprising—But that others, who sincerely believe the gospel, should permit themselves to be blinded by arguments so vain and futile, to what is therein most plainly represented, and thus lose the support and confidence and encouragement they would otherwise receive from it, may indeed justly occasion some admiration.

† The above passage was written at the beginning of the present year, (1783,) and what hath since appeared, tends by no mean to invalidate the truth of the assertion.

know.

knowledge thereof, and the others by confirming their declarations so repeatedly made, that the greater part of men would give no heed to their words: And while the impugnors of the gospel do themselves bear so strong testimony to its divine origin, and the more strenuous their opposition, and the louder their blasphemy becomes, the more plainly its truth is manifested; can we fail to acknowledge and admire, that they share the just and common fate of the enemies of God, in that they weary themselves with vanity, and labour in a thing of nought, while He who sitteth in the heavens hath them in derision, by his prophets exposing their folly, and rebuking their madness, saying, "Remember this, and shew yourselves men: Bring it to mind again, O ye transgressours; remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from the antient times, the things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:" Or,

Can we, on the other hand, but be struck with awe, and have our attention most fully engaged on the approach of events, which transcend all other importance, and which will determine the fate of the human race? We cannot but be struck with awe, and have our attention most fully engaged on the approach of events, which transcend all other importance, and which will determine the fate of the human race?

" the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with
 " fury, a continuing whirlwind, it shall fall
 " with pain upon the head of the wicked. The
 " fierce anger of the Lord shall not return,
 " until He have done it, and until He have
 " performed the intents of His heart: In the
 " latter daies ye shall consider it §.—At the
 " same time, saith the Lord, I will be the God
 " of all the families of Israel, and they shall
 " be my people." Therefore, "Hear the word
 " of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it
 " in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered
 " Israel will gather him, and keep him as a
 " shepherd doth his flock."

§ Jer. xxx, 23, 47

F I N I S.